



TECHNICAL REPORT

Malawi Children's Corners Situational Assessment

MARCH 2016

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The Children's Corner Visit Team

DISCLAIMER

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Acronyms

ASSIST	USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems Project
CBO	Community-based organization
CC	Children’s Corner
CCVT	Children’s Corner Visit Team
CPW	Child Protection Worker
MoGCDSW	Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NOVOC	Network of Organizations for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PSS	Psychosocial support
QI	Quality improvement
REPSSI	Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
SW	Social Worker
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
URC	University Research Co., LLC
USAID	US Agency for International Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Malawi Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) is working to meet the psychosocial needs of Malawi's children. To this end, the MoGCDSW supports Children's Corners (CCs) which provide supervision to children in after-school programs for 6-18 year-olds. The CCs are convened in local settings throughout rural Malawi to offer psychosocial support, encourage good school performance, and promote the wellbeing of Malawi's children, particularly those who are vulnerable. A collaborative group led by the Ministry and UNICEF recently developed a draft CC Facilitator Guide. In September and October 2015 the MoGCDSW, with support from UNICEF, conducted week-long regional trainings on the CC Facilitator Guide for teams of district leaders across the three regions of the country. The Ministry is planning to conduct additional trainings for district leaders and to oversee and support district leaders as they train CC volunteers.

In 2012, the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems Project (ASSIST) embarked on a process whereby 10 districts surveyed and analyzed the problems of orphans and vulnerable children in their communities, applying a quality improvement approach to organize the undertaking. Psychosocial problems and low school performance were consistently identified as problems affecting orphans and vulnerable children, and CCs were one of the solutions the district improvement teams supported by ASSIST selected to address the problem.

ASSIST and the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI) proposed to develop a user-friendly assessment tool to routinely track and assess child CC participants. In support of this tool development initiative, with the approval of the MoGCDSW, a CC Visit Team (CCVT), comprised of five members from ASSIST, REPSSI, and the University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, visited four CCs (two each in Balaka and Mangochi districts), to conduct a situational assessment of Children's Corners in Malawi. The assessment included a detailed field study of the four CC programs and key informant interviews with leaders in the MoGCDSW, district level governance, and community-based organizations (CBOs) working with vulnerable children. The intention was to create a report about the CC programs, facilitators, child participants, CBO teams, and the support they get from the village headmen and broader community. The report will inform the design of future facilitator training and child assessment tool development and implementation.

Major themes that emerged from the CC interviews and observations include:

- **Simultaneous enhancement of psychosocial and educational assets is optimal for child development.** Vulnerable children typically face challenges in both areas. Interview respondents consistently reported that addressing children's psychosocial challenges resulted in improved school engagement and success and that school success enhanced psychosocial well-being.
- **Each CC had unique strengths, often related to exceptional commitment and skills of facilitators and/or community resources.** CC facilitator selection was based more on motivation to work with children and contribute to the community than years completed in school.
- **A broad range of factors motivated children to attend, parents to send, and communities to support CCs.** The most prominent reasons to emerge from the children's interviews included: help with school work, chance to socialize and make friends, get support to handle problems, and opportunity to play. Parents and CBO members emphasized how vital it was that the CC provided children in their communities with positive activities to help them stay away from negative behaviors. They also stressed how important it was that vulnerable children play with peers without feeling discriminated against.
- **Strong partnerships were forged between CC and community constituents.** The strength of the CC program was highly related to the level of community support it received. Partnerships

with the CBOs, the village leaders, local schools, and parents were seen as vital to the success of the program.

- **CC volunteers are in short supply; child-to-facilitator ratios are high; and children who attend have a wide range of ages and abilities.** These factors impede the ability of volunteers to attend adequately to children’s individual needs, much less deliver a structured curriculum. Increasing community awareness about the value of the CC and the need for more volunteer facilitators is critical.
- **The need for training was underscored by CC facilitators and CBO members.** Both expressed an interest in participating in training to learn about how to recognize and respond to children’s psychosocial needs. The four CC programs visited shared a strong commitment to supporting child rights and contributing to child protection. Desire for training in handling child abuse cases was also a recurrent theme.
- **CC facilitators and CBO members all expressed the need for materials and play equipment.** Many of the CCs had only rudimentary play, art, sports, and academic support materials—some, only a homemade ball. Those with the CC Facilitator Guide lacked the materials (paper, pens) necessary to complete lessons as outlined and felt they could not implement suggested activities simply by reading the guide, but needed role modeling and supervised practice. All expressed concerns about the nutritional needs of the children.

The MoGCDSW is supporting the development of a methodology for documenting the psychosocial wellbeing of children that participate in the CCs and changes in wellbeing over time. A number of indicators from four psychosocial domains reflecting the target goals of the CC—emotional, social, skills, and academic—are currently under consideration. The CC Visit Team is now developing an assessment tool, implementation protocol, and training plan to support documenting the progress that vulnerable children make in their psychosocial wellbeing and school performance, as a result of their participation in a CC.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Malawi Ministry of Gender, Children, Disability, and Social Welfare (MoGCDSW) is working to meet the psychosocial needs of Malawi's children. To this end, the MoGCDSW supports Children's Corners (CCs) which provide adult supervision for 6-18 year-old children as they engage in after-school activities that offer psychosocial support (PSS), encourage good school performance, and promote the wellbeing of children, particularly those who are vulnerable.

The CCs receive oversight from community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout rural Malawi and convene in local play areas and school grounds. While some volunteers may have received informal training in child psychosocial needs from District Social Welfare Officers, no systematic nationwide hiring or training practices have been implemented for CC volunteers. However, a collaborative group led by the MoGCDSW and UNICEF recently developed a draft CC Facilitator Guide. The guide gives instructions for carrying out a number of different activities designed to address the CC goals. Stated objectives of CC activities articulated in the guide are:

- Provide emotional healing and self-awareness,
- Reduce discrimination,
- Promote respect for children's rights,
- Equip children with knowledge and skills for their social, economic and cultural development, and
- Promote child participation in the community, at large.

While to date little systematic training has been offered to CC volunteers, in September and October 2015, the MoGCDSW, with support from UNICEF, conducted two week-long regional trainings on the CC Facilitator Guide for teams of district leaders from all over the country, including District Officers of the MoGCDSW. At the trainings, district teams wrote action plans that outlined their goals for training CC facilitators using the CC Facilitator Guide. Teams submitted these plans to the Ministry. The Ministry is planning to conduct additional trainings for district leaders and to oversee and support district leaders as they train CC volunteers.

With the approval of the MoGCDSW, a five-member CC Visit Team (CCVT) comprised of representatives from the USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST) Project, the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), and the University of Washington, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, conducted a situational assessment of Children's Corners in Malawi. The purpose of the assessment was to inform the design of a child assessment tool, a program for training on the tool, and a protocol for implementation of the tool.

B. Methodology

The assessment included review of relevant literature about CCs, key informant interviews with leaders in the MoGCDSW, district level governance and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with vulnerable children and a detailed field study of two CCs in each of Balaka and Mangochi districts. The intention was to create a report about the CC programs, facilitators, child participants, CBO teams, and the support they get from the village headmen and broader community.

Key informant interviews were conducted with McKnight Kalanda, Director of Children's Affairs, and Harry Satumba, National Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Coordinator, MoGCDSW, Mirriam Kaluwa, Child Protection Programme Officer, UNICEF, Monica Chang'anamuno, CC training facilitator and former member of Network of Organizations for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NOVOC), and Jean Nthengwe, Lilongwe District Social Welfare Officer

The CCVT prepared interview scripts with relevant questions to ask CC interview respondents (see **Appendices 1-5**). The scripts differed depending upon the role of the respondent. Each covered a wide range of topics that included CC goals, participants, programming, oversight, community connections, benefits, challenges, and needs.

The team carried out systematic data collection in four CCs: Kankao CC and Kabango CC in Balaka District, and Masongola CC and Lusalumwe CC in Mangochi District, from Tuesday through Thursday, 10-12 November 2015. With Chichewa to English language interpretation support from Malawian team members and local teachers, the three University of Washington team members followed the scripts to conduct individual interviews with the CC Lead Facilitator, other CC Facilitators, and members of the CBOs/quality improvement (QI) teams and to conduct focus group discussions with groups of 10-14 CC child participants. In addition to conducting interviews, during each visit, one team member conducted a visual inventory of the physical layout of the CC, materials, and play equipment and observed interactions among children and adults and among the children during a CC session (see **Appendix 6**). After completing the interviews, the team transcribed the written scripts that provided the voices of facilitators, children, community leaders, and, in some communities and parents. The summaries of the data from these interviews and observations are provided for each CC in **Appendices 7-9**.

Although the situational assessment is based on systematic interviews and observations of only four of Malawi's estimated 5,000 CCs, we believe that it provides insights about CCs beyond the two districts which were visited.

The CCVT took note of a number of characteristics that shape the unique contribution that CCs make towards the enhancing psychosocial wellbeing and school performance of vulnerable children. Malawi's CCs:

- Target school-aged child population.
- Focus simultaneous attention on children's psychosocial and educational needs.
- Intentionally integrate vulnerable children with less vulnerable children as participants.
- Function in partnership with and under directives of community organizations.
- Are volunteer-run.
- Take advantage of a long-standing practice of children gathering after-school for play and homework activities with the addition of adult supervision.
- Offer programming that is created through combined ingenuity of participating adults, children and available community support and resources.
- Promote positive behaviors; deter negative behaviors.

MoGCDSW, district, and community leaders who have worked with Malawi's CCs over the years report that CCs come in "different packages" and gave specific examples of innovations in CC practices.

- CCs with their own communal garden that allows them to distribute food to children most in need.
- CCs engaged in fundraising activities to support children who need school supplies or uniforms.
- CCs that established a "parliament" and sent CC child "representatives" to each other's villages to assess needs, then come together to determine who/how to help, e.g., decide to work together to help repair a home in one village.
- Children in a CC that wanted to focus on ending child labor so they established a communal garden and gave food to families in need so their children could attend the CC.

- Village headmen who publicly recognized the CC volunteers for their dedication and important contribution to the community.

Child participants: The number of children who were officially registered varied from 60 to 160 across the four CCs. The number of children who arrived at the CCs on the three CCVT visits ranged from 150 to 350. Unlike designated orphans groups, each CC had intentionally recruited a mix of vulnerable and less vulnerable children. Each of the CCs was currently targeting only primary school learners. However, ages ranged from 6 to over 20 years in some programs, with modal age across the CCs being upper primary school age, or 11-15 years. Each CC had a near even mix of girl and boy participants. Three of the CCs were affiliated to their local primary schools and were convened on school grounds. One (Lusalumwe) was not directly connected with a specific school and was convened on a play field within the premises of a public health centre.

II. FINDINGS

A. Themes and Insights Emerging from Children’s Corner Interviews and Observations

1. Simultaneous enhancement of psychosocial and educational assets which enhance overall child wellbeing

- A theme that surfaced throughout the interviews was that children benefit from adults focusing on their educational and psychosocial needs simultaneously. Specifically, interview respondents consistently reported that addressing psychosocial challenges (e.g., lack of supervision, emotional hardships, and isolation) resulted in improving school engagement and success, and that school success enhanced psychosocial wellbeing (e.g., self-esteem, hope in the future, and socialization). Building social, emotional, and academic assets simultaneously allows these essential components to work hand in hand to improve children’s well-being.
- This focus on the interplay of psychosocial and academic factors was perceived to be of particular advantage to vulnerable children. For some, the CC was the first setting in which they were accepted as playmates with their fellow learners. With the support they received from motivated mentors who reached out to caregivers and worked with teachers, vulnerable children often made significant gains in social and emotional realms as well as educational performance.
- The legal and community responsibility to protect children establishes the link between Child Protection Services and the CC. By extension, this collaboration reflects the understanding that children must be safe from negative influences and have their rights protected to be able to learn and thrive. A child who is abused in any way or living in fear cannot learn, much less flourish emotionally and socially. Child rights are an intrinsic foundation of academic and psychosocial wellbeing. The CC interview respondents all knew of the multiple options they have for working with suspected cases of child abuse. They knew that they can refer to the CBO, the community victim support unit, or the Child Protection Worker.
- This consistent reference to the combined benefits of academic, psychosocial, and skill development was found in responses across interview respondents. They seamlessly shifted back and forth between academic and psychosocial advantages of the program as they discussed the merits of the CCs. Examples are as follows:
 - One facilitator reported: *Before, they were stealing, watching videos, using obscene language. Now in just eight months, they don’t do those things. We have a strong influence on them by supporting them in good behavior, respect for others, and caring*

about each other and themselves. And their improvement was also reflected in their grades, attendance, and school performance.

- Child interview respondents also articulated the benefits of the CC and their personal relationship with the facilitator. One teen reported: *The CC facilitator helps us with our homework and encourages us to play and do activities. We become able to think fast. The CC Facilitator helps us solve problems like how to manage if you lose loved ones. Other teens indicated that the CC helps them: do better in classes and keep their brains fresh, bones strong, and body healthy...get help with problems, learn things in school syllabus, solve problems, remove stress and anxiety... and learn how to take care of sick people.*

2. Unique talents, dedication, and motivation in Children’s Corners

- Each CC had different strengths and emphases in their programs, and within each CC, individual adults stood out as exceptionally committed and capable in the ways they were able to support vulnerable and other children. The unique contributions of these individuals created different “profiles” of strengths across the CC settings. Educational attainment was not a determinant of which individuals emerged as talented and devoted within the CC program.
- In one instance, the facilitator made home visits, galvanized community support by collaborating with the village church and mosque, spear-headed the making of porridge for afternoon snack, tutored the children, and provided valuable counseling to individual children (that was validated by separate child interviews). Twelve children in one CC collaborated to perform an intricate and humorous skit with a specific theme on child care to an appreciative audience of children and adults. They had been inspired by a facilitator with a particular interest in drama. The facilitator in another CC worked actively with parents to ensure that girls were encouraged to attend school and that issues related to sexuality and reproductive health, like pregnancy or menses, did not impede their psychological adjustment or school progress.

3. Factors that motivate children to attend, parents to send, and communities to support Children’s Corners

- Children responded to questions about their reasons for attending the CC. The most prominent themes that emerged from discussion of why children attend include:
 - Play games and have fun socializing with other children
 - Get help and support with school work and encouragement to do well in school
 - Learn to read, write, and do mathematics
 - Make friends; help friends
 - Get support from facilitators/mentors in handling personal problems
 - Develop a strong, healthy body through vigorous outdoor play
 - Remove bad thoughts, stress, anxiety
 - Learn how to respect and help others
 - Stay out of trouble during after school hours
 - Learn not to say bad things about other people who have lost their parents, say helpful things to them
 - Learn about helping parents with chores like fetching water, grow kitchen garden

- Mentors teach agricultural skills
- In one CC, children explained: *Often we are hungry. We go home, there is nothing to eat. Even if we are very hungry, we start playing and it is better. Coming here helps us forget our problems.*
- A boy reported that he was: *Having challenges in school and looking for help. I decided that I wanted to attend the CC and talked with my parents who thought it was a good idea.*
- A 14-year-old girl reported: *I did not know anything before, and now I can play soccer as good as a boy.*
- Another child said: *Mentors help with mathematics, correct mistakes, and we can bring challenges from school class to mentors who will help us overcome the challenge.*
- An 18-year-old boy reported: *The mentor taught us agricultural skills that we can use back home for kitchen gardens—land clearing, seed planting, so we can grow vegetables.*
- CBO members wanted to provide the community with something for children to do after school because they were watching video games and getting into trouble with things like drugs and early sex. They wanted their children to have a positive place to spend time. They saw the CC as providing particular benefits to orphans because they could:
 - Participate in the community and not feel marginalized
 - Associate with other children who do not have the same problems
 - Be in a place with other children and not feel discriminated against
 - Meet with their friends and discuss challenges they are experiencing which they cannot talk about at home
- Parents were motivated to send their children to the CC because they had more time to be productive while their children were supervised after school. Parents also reported that children who attend the CC:
 - Perform better in school
 - Learn cleanliness
 - Are more respectful to parents
 - Do not go to videos or get into other kinds of trouble after school
 - Have time to play
- Parents and CBO members appreciated that children who participate in the CC are protected from negative peer influences, harassment that may occur at the market, and the lure of the video kiosks. Safety and protection contribute to educational and socialization goals for children who attend the CC.
- Parents also send their nursery-aged children who see role modeling of positive social interactions, peaceable co-existence, and how to do homework.
- A CBO Director stated: *Psychosocial needs of children are not a problem to hide. A child is a child. We accept problems and try to address them openly.*
- As one CBO member explained: *When the children are involved in the CC, they do not cause trouble to their parents and are less likely to get pregnant or marry at a young age.*
- Another said: *We (CBO members) encourage youth to join the CC so that they won't engage in "bad behavior" like stealing.*

- According to a parent, the way the CC works is this: *Vulnerable children are demoralized and not performing well in school. They come to the CC to play with other children. They become sharp learners.*
- Each of the four CCs has an “open enrollment” policy. However, some children who want to attend the CC are unable to. Children and facilitators reported the reasons that children who wanted to attend were not able due to:
 - Children, particularly orphans and girls, have responsibilities at home that they must do immediately after school.
 - In one community where 90% of children are Muslim, the CC is held at the same time the Madrassah School is convened.
 - Parents disapprove of their children being exposed to topics of reproductive health by CC facilitators.
 - In all villages, some parents were not aware of the CC or its benefits, so they did not send their children. As reported by one facilitator: *The Village Head talks to the parents at the Parent Teacher Association meetings and encourages them to let their children come to the CC. Some parents need more education, i.e. “civic education,” to understand about the importance of community-building and to let their children come.*
 - In one village, older girls were called by their families to perform chores after school and on weekends, so they could not attend the CC. These girls would typically just drop in on the CC session for a short while for a “small dose” of the CC social milieu and activities and then proceed home to attend to their responsibilities.

4. Strong partnerships forged between Children’s Corners and community groups

- **CBOs:** These are the key overseers and supporters of CCs. CBO involvement was seen as a key factor contributing to the strength and potential of the CC. Engaging the CBO teams in a collaborative analysis of community needs allowed them to gain an appreciation of the importance of strengthening children’s psychosocial support (PSS) to help communities attain educational performance targets, as well as of the link between children’s educational attainment and the way forward for their communities.
 - One CBO leader commented: *Before, we did not understand the importance of education, and now we understand the benefits and have high aims for our children.*
- **Village headmen and other village leaders:** These are essential to the acceptance and support of the CC in the communities we visited. While the level of involvement of the village headman in the CC program varied across the four sites visited, they support the CCs in many different ways including:
 - Provides CC site for program – the community meeting site
 - Talks about the value of the CC at community meetings
 - Nominates appropriate community members to serve as volunteer CC facilitators
 - Encourages parents to send their children to the CC
 - Helps out at the CC with story-telling and other children’s activities
 - Provides subsidies (seeds) for the kitchen garden program
 - Donates balls and other play equipment

- Encourages children to tell the facilitators any problems they have that they cannot talk about at home
- Fines parents if their children are absent from school which in turn supports CC attendance
- **Local schools:** Historically, since CCs and Early Childhood Centers are sponsored by the MoGCDSW, they have set their sights on improving child protection and children’s psychosocial well-being. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth sponsor similar extra-curricular programming. Under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education are school clubs, and under the Ministry of Youth are Youth Clubs. To date, school achievement has not been an explicit CC goal. However, strengthening children’s social networks and sense of empowerment are both CC goals whose effects are likely to stretch to improved school attendance and achievement. Thus UNICEF sees a good potential of linkage of psychosocial and educational targets, particularly since school success is a very tangible and desirable child outcome. In visiting Balaka and Mangochi district CC programs, the team learned that partnering with schools was a key factor in successful CC implementation. Recognition in these districts of the CC as one strategy to improve school performance led to the establishment of constructive CC-school partnerships for three of the Children’s Corners. The CC-school partnership models varied from site to site and included:
 - Locating CC on school grounds
 - Sharing use of school buildings and play fields
 - Gaining strong support of Head Teachers and Parent-Teacher Association Chairperson
 - Selecting teachers to serve as Lead CC Facilitator
 - Identifying a specific teacher to serve as CC-school liaison to help CC facilitators effectively address academic needs of the learners
 - Allowing the facilitators easy access to the teachers who can give them strategies to help the children with their school work
- **Child Protection Workers (CPWs):** The CCs work as partners with different individuals who can facilitate child protection referrals. Not only do they have an assigned CPW in their locality, but they are supported by their CBO and QI teams to address suspected child abuse cases.
- **Other organizations/constituencies:** Involvement was variable across sites. At some sites, local religious organizations contributed in these ways:
 - Allowed use of their space for activities
 - Provided materials – seeds, uniforms, school materials
 - Helped to counsel the children
 - Collaborated with CC to meet the needs of some children
- Support by other community organizations was even more variable, limited in many sites, and included:
 - Working closely with local health center: Using space outside the center, health center staff serving as facilitators, teaching about adolescent reproductive health issues in the CC, providing guidance about adolescent development and early pregnancy prevention to girls in the CC, welcoming CC attendees for sexually transmitted infection treatment at clinic, and distributing condoms to sexually active adolescents.

- Obtaining support from an NGO working in the area in the form of training and materials (uniforms, materials for gardens).
- **Parents/caregivers:** Partnerships with CCs were notable and were reflected in active outreach to and communication with parents/caregivers by CC facilitators. Both CBO teams and CC facilitators described active outreach to parents to discuss issues related to individual children and to encourage families to send children to participate in the CC. Issues in which CBO teams and CC facilitators engaged caregivers included: Promoting school attendance, talking with families about children's progress in school, and discussing children's health and psychosocial problems. Parents were also welcomed to contribute their skills in the CC programs. Examples of parental involvement included:
 - Mothers helping to teach traditional dances
 - Mothers' Groups working with adolescent girls
 - Parents making writing notebooks by folding and stapling paper

Mobilization to encourage parental involvement could enhance the CC's ability to supervise children more closely, offer diverse skills training to children, and increase the community's pride in and commitment to the CCs.

5. Commitment to supporting child rights and child protection

CC facilitators are committed to child protection and work closely with Child Protection Workers. Some of the key informant interviews reflected the commitment and challenges that Child Protection Services, CC facilitators and the CBOs share in preventing and intervening on child abuse. Every interview mentioned obstacles to referral: uncertainty about the nature and extent of abuse, inhibition about implicating neighbors or family members, and fear of retribution for themselves and the child. The following factors are relevant to how child protection issues are addressed vis-a-vis the Children's Corners.

- **Continuity of services to families with vulnerable children:** For children 0-2 years old, families have access to a mother's group for parenting. The Early Childhood Development Center serves 3-5 year olds. CCs are a valuable service for children, especially vulnerable ones, in the 6-18 year-old group. The CC is a place that children can be safe and protected from negative influences and exploitation. They provide supervision where normally the children would play unsupervised. Although the number of CPWs relative to the number of children in districts is small, volunteers assist with child protection referrals. Some of the volunteers are retired teachers and very capable.
- **CPW referrals:** The CPW informs the district office when appropriate after they have conducted an evaluation. Sexual abuse is reported to the police and the "One Stop" center at the hospital and legal action ensues. Although the number of referrals initiated by CC facilitators is low, facilitators feel supported by CBOs when they alert them about problems. One CC facilitator recounted a complicated case of a girl's rape which involved interviewing her classmates, who were teasing her, and her mother, who was reluctant to cooperate because the abuser was an uncle. The CBO team and CC worked together to ensure that the girl was seen at the hospital and that the case was reported to the police. Other case management vignettes involved an albino child kept home from school due to family shame, and another child kept home from school because she was pregnant. In both of these cases, the CC facilitator and CBO team worked together to influence the family and to successfully support the children resuming their studies.
- **Child rights:** While virtually all of the facilitators and CBO members reported problems related to lack of training in counseling, they showed a remarkable sensitivity in relation to speaking with parents about the rights and needs of children on family visits. When paying a visit to a family, a

facilitator mentioned that he arrives with a smile on his face so that the parents do not think he is getting them or the child in trouble. In one example, parents were keeping their child home from school, sending him to work and letting him visit video kiosks. The facilitator described how he elicited concerns from the parents themselves about their child's status so that they could be collaborative in addressing the child's needs. Although there was consensus among respondents about the need to address issues of abuse and get more training, the value placed on child rights and the intention to protect children from harm was apparent.

6. Community education and support as a strategy to strengthen Children's Corners

There is a need to increase knowledge throughout the community about the fact that PSS is essential for children to build healthy social relationships and succeed in school. In fact, PSS is a primary factor in enabling children to grow up to be responsible, generous, and productive community members as adults. Wide spread promotion using radio campaigns (e.g., Farm Radio), community forums, engagement with local churches and mosques, and outreach to parents about the value of PSS and CCs may help this process.

UNICEF carries out community mobilization to reduce child abuse and neglect in villages within 10 districts of Malawi. Communities respond by addressing impediments to child abuse reporting, including lack of knowledge about adverse consequences and illegality of child abuse. In many settings, child sexual abuse and child labor are both considered family matters. Mobilization activities engage communities in a dialogue about how these practices harm children and empower communities to take action. Often the outcomes of community mobilization include establishment of a village committee to oversee child protection, educating and empowering children to advocate for their rights, including reporting child abuse and child labor, reducing stigma and challenging social norms about keeping matters of child protection inside the family, and establishment of CC programs.

Over the next five years, UNICEF has set a goal of extending community education and support efforts and establishing 500 new CC programs per year.

Once established, village leaders can play an integral part in the promotion and success of the CC when they recognize its role in promoting the psychosocial wellbeing and educational progress of local children. While the degree to which village leaders prioritize this varies, the interview respondents reported that village leaders' support has a significant impact on the CC's success. When village leaders demonstrate their support, it communicates that value is placed on the facilitator's status in the community, as well as on children themselves. Because facilitators can sometimes be mocked by family and friends about their volunteering and working for free, they need the support of village leaders and other officials in the community.

7. The essential agenda of addressing volunteer capacity

CC volunteers are in short supply. They work with very large groups of children with a wide range of ages and abilities, making it hard to attend to individual needs, much less deliver a structured curriculum. The following points should be taken into account when considering strategies to increase volunteer capacity:

- **CBO criteria for selecting CC facilitators:** A strength of the existing programs is that they make use of a diverse group of talented CC facilitators with varied educational backgrounds. The CBOs have established criteria for selecting the CC facilitators. Across programs these criteria were more focused on the volunteer's level of commitment, enthusiasm, and character than on their educational attainment. This seems to be an effective strategy.
- **Status of the CC facilitators:** The value of a volunteer CC facilitator's efforts are sometimes questioned by family and friends. Increased understanding, visibility, and appreciation of the CC

by community members will enhance the status of volunteering for the CC and could increase the number of volunteers.

- **Importance of not overburdening volunteers:** One of our key informants emphasized the need for communities to make efforts to expand the number of individuals involved in community-focused work. The key informant noted that often a few volunteers are encouraged to take on many responsibilities, but this can lead to overburdening and eventually the need to step back from the volunteer work. Building volunteer capacity in communities helps to foster community pride and the sense that communities are empowered to address their own needs.
- **Compensation for volunteers:** UNICEF is concerned that unless compensation or incentives are provided for volunteer CC facilitators, their commitment to sustain the CC program will waver. They have seen signs of this in the high turnover and erratic attendance of individual volunteers.

Strategies outlined in section 6 above, such as mobilizing support from the village leaders to increase awareness of and respect for the CCs and the CC volunteers, could enhance the number and quality of individuals interested in working with CCs and allow for program development. The CC Facilitator Guide suggests a ratio of 20 children:1 adult. With recruitment of additional facilitators, child: adult ratios will decrease, and facilitators will be able to give more individualized attention to the needs of the children.

8. Management support as an essential feature of operating Children’s Corners

At the group village level in Balaka and Mangochi, CBOs oversee the CC programs, and facilitators are accountable to the CBO. The CBO and QI members contribute management support by evaluating applications and selecting facilitators, encouraging record-keeping, visiting to capture data from school settings, and helping with child recruitment. Management support and monitoring of the CCs and school performance by the QI teams may have sent a message to the entire community about the value of children’s psychosocial wellbeing and school performance, but this is not known for certain. Interview respondents also made the following points:

- The QI and CBO support received from USAID ASSIST has been appreciated and utilized. For instance, during one CC visit, the “fishbone” technique was mentioned during introductions. The technique helps participants identify problems in their community and importantly, includes steps toward problem-solving with existing resources.
- While the lack of training left many facilitators feeling overwhelmed in their ability to meet the psychosocial needs of the CC children, they feel supported by the CBO and feel that they can go to them with problems.
- District level officials who have received the CC Facilitator Guide training have made action plans about further training for individuals at the community level. Some also plan community mobilization efforts, but this training dissemination is in its early stages. Management support will be an essential part of this implementation.
- Facilitators and CBOs have increased attention to record-keeping. In each of the CCs, the facilitators kept a registration book that listed names of each child including those with an orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) designation. The CCs varied in whether and how they recorded CC attendance, OVC documentation, and other information about specific children. The CCs’ progress with record keeping, along with the QI teams’ success with capturing school data, suggest that the communities may be ready to move forward with monitoring and assessment of the psychosocial and educational status of individual CC participants. **Appendix 9** gives specifics of record-keeping for each of the four CCs visited.

As viewed by UNICEF, at the national level, current impediments to CC program success include lack of minimal standards and monitoring of CC program implementation, leading to a very wide range of models and quality of services.

9. The plea for training — a constant refrain

CBO members consistently asserted that there is a clear need for training to allow for effective leadership and success of CC goals. The CC facilitators expressed an ardent interest in training to enhance their skills. Learning new methods, skills, and activities to support the students was a need requested by CC volunteers at each site visited. They could foresee the need for training on proposed child assessment protocols.

With leadership from the MoGCDSW, UNICEF, USAID, and REPSSI, a team has been working for over five years to draft a curriculum for CC facilitators to implement to reach program goals. In 2015, the team completed writing and pre-testing a CC Facilitator Guide. The guide is a handbook of activities for facilitators to implement to support child psychosocial well-being, including positive identity formation, a sense of belonging within a community, social skills, child rights, artistic expression, entrepreneurship, and contribution to the community. Leaders in every district have been trained as trainers.

The next step is to organize and deliver training to facilitators. In three of the four sites the team visited, CBOs had seen the new CC Facilitator Guide but felt challenged by its English language and sophisticated content. They indicated that the activities were good but: *Only useful if we are trained in how to use the materials/teach the lessons and understand and respond to the children's individual problems.*

The interviews, field observations, and input from the key informants interviewed suggest consideration of the following points in relation to training development:

- Train people who are the “right” group—i.e., people who are “motivated.”
- CC facilitators need training that covers a number of topics including how to use the CC Facilitator Guide, how to identify and engage individual children to address their needs, and how to manage child protection situations.
- CBOs need training in how to support and guide the CC facilitators.
- Curriculum, counselling, and child protection training should be carried out directly with the CC facilitators.
- CBO members and key community leaders who will continue to oversee the CCs and facilitators need training as well.
- Training manual and materials must be simple.
- Suggestion of breaking the Facilitator Guide into sections and holding 2-3 day trainings every 6-12 months.

Interview respondents noted that they needed more training in handling child abuse cases, especially when the abuser is a family member. Given the role of the facilitator and the CC priority of child protection, asking facilitators to sign a pledge to not violate child rights is a good policy. Only one CC had implemented this policy. When the Journey of Life training is given, community members and facilitators naturally become more aware of signs and symptoms of child abuse. The Journey of Life can be an entry point for more training on child rights, how to collaborate with families, and how to make child abuse referrals. UNICEF hopes that training will result in advancement of CC programming from mainly dancing and play to implementation of the psychosocial well-being, promoting activities in the CC Facilitator Guide.

10. Materials for supporting CC activities are very scarce

The CC facilitators and their CBO support teams all expressed the need for materials. Many of the CCs only had rudimentary play, art, sports, and academic support materials—some only a homemade ball. All expressed concerns about the nutritional needs of the children. Only one site had resources to periodically provide some porridge.

Those that had tried activities from the CC Facilitator Guide lacked the materials (paper, pens) necessary to complete the lesson as outlined. Increased collaboration with community members, parents, religious groups, and NGOs working in the communities is needed to provide the CCs with adequate balls, pens, paper, nets, and games.

In recent years, UNICEF’s intention has been to provide each of the 5,000 CC programs and newly established programs in Malawi with “CC Starter Kits.” The kits include balls, skip ropes, learning materials (paper and pens), checkers, and Bao games. Over time, with heavy use, the materials and equipment from the original kit need replacement. UNICEF is also considering revamping the kits and including simple pinafores for team games and sports.

In 2016, UNICEF is poised to conduct a thorough inventory of CC programs throughout Malawi, including geographical mapping and documentation of child enrollment and attendance, facilitators, supplies, and equipment. This will be the first effort to document the progress Malawi has made in nation-wide program implementation.

III. NEXT STEPS

A. Assessing the Psychosocial Status of CC Participants

The MoGCDSW is supporting the development of a methodology for documenting the psychosocial wellbeing of children that participate in the CCs and changes in wellbeing over time. A number of indicators from four psychosocial domains reflecting the target goals of the CC (emotional, social, skills, and academic) are currently under consideration. The value of systematic tracking and assessment of the psychosocial wellbeing of child CC participants is two-fold:

1. It will give the CC facilitators and community supporters a basis for individual psychosocial support interventions. As an example, if a child is assessed three times over the course of 18 months and has not shown improvement in her poor attitude towards school, the assessment results can prompt an appropriate response.
2. Systematic tracking and assessment of all CC participants will give facilitators, CBOs, and the wider community data to support their impressions about the good work they are undertaking or the challenges they are facing.

The introduction of standardized, periodic measurement is consistent with the QI approach that has been tested and shown to be an effective way for communities to recognize and solve problems. As an example, results of ongoing assessment of all children registered in a CC could show a pattern where 13-15 year-old girls are improving in their social connectedness, while in general the 13-15 year-old boys are not. This finding would prompt the community to consider introducing or adapting a social skills curriculum specifically targeting 13-15 year-old boys.

The tracking and assessment procedures will need to maximize value and validity of the information gathered while also recognizing that the human resources are already overburdened. Thus, to be implemented on a large scale, the procedures have to take account of the following realities:

- The goals of the CCs, as specified by MoGCDSW;
- The high child-to-adult ratio;

- Variable literacy levels of CC volunteer facilitators;
- Low resources of most CC programs;
- Best measurement practice of using previously validated assessment tools.

The team learned that UNICEF is in strong support of the development of impact assessment to generate evidence as to the effectiveness of the CC program. UNICEF concurs with the team's impression that data collection is not carried out systematically across CC sites, such that the number of programs, number of children, school status of children, and progress of children toward program goals of improved psychosocial well-being are unknown.

UNICEF suggested that long-range indicators in the assessment might include: school performance, socialization, obedience, and exposure to abuse and physical violence. In the short-term, UNICEF believes that parents would like to see improvements in their children's school attendance, compliant behavior, cooperation with chores, and generosity. Children themselves might wish for different outcomes, such as making friends, having fun, getting help with homework, and bending the ear of a friendly adult.

The CC tracking and assessment protocol will be predicated on the already firm child registration and attendance - taking foundation that the CC facilitators have instituted with the guidance of CBOs and community QI teams. Documentation practices in the four CCs are described briefly in the earlier management section and illustrated in greater detail in **Appendix 9**. The CC assessment protocol will be pilot tested in early 2016. It is likely that a CC tracking and assessment training module will be offered during CC facilitator training events for QI team members and CC facilitators.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Children’s Group Interview Form

Date _____ Time _____ Name of CC Program _____

Observer: _____

1. Introductions: Would each of you please tell us your name, how old you are now and how old you were when you started coming to the CC?			
Name	Gender	Age	Month/Year Started CC
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Group Interview Questions:	
2. What’s your name, age, and age when you started CC? Have each child give info, record in table above	
3. Whose idea was it for you to come to CC?	
4. What do you like about coming to the CC?	
5. What is your favorite activity at the CC?	
6. Is there anything you don’t like about the CC?	
7. How many of you have made new friends at the CC? RAISE HANDS : # = _____	
8. How many of you attend school? RAISE HANDS : # = _____	
9. If not attending school, WHY NOT?	
10. Do you think school is important for your future? Why?	
11. Do you work on homework at the CC? RAISE HAND, # = _____	
12. Tell me about when someone has helped you? Who helped? What did they do? Describe:	
13. How does coming to the CC help you?	
14. Does coming to the CC help you do better at school? # Yes; Describe:	
15. We have asked a lot of questions about the CC, what is important that we have not asked about?	
16. I have asked you a lot of questions. Do you have any questions for me?	

Appendix 2: Community-based Organization Representatives Interview Form

Date _____ Time _____ Name of CC Program _____

Observer: _____

1. Introductions: Please tell us what your role is as part of the CBO? What group/organization do you represent? How are you involved with the CC program?			
	Name	Role in CBO/in community	Work with CC?

Group Interview Questions:	
2. How does your CBO work with the CC?	
3. How did you first get involved with the CC?	
4. What are the qualifications a person needs to be the facilitator in the CC program?	
5. Do facilitators need to have completed a certain level of education?	
6. Has the facilitator had training in child development?	
7. Is the facilitator expected to do community outreach or public speaking?	
8. Is there a CC Advisory Committee that oversees the CC program? What do they do to support the CC?	
9. Does the CBO get support for the CC from any organization or group? What does the CBO do to get funds?	
10. How/who decides how these funds are allocated?	
11. How do the local chiefs support the CC? Do they ever visit the CC?	
12. How do the local churches or mosques support the CC? Do they visit?	
13. How do the local schools support the CC? Describe:	
14. Does the CC have ties to other community organizations? Which ones? How are these organizations involved? Describe:	
15. How do you hope that children will benefit by participating in the CC?	
16. What other people in the community really benefit from the CC program? How?	
17. What do most people in the community feel about the CC program? Why?	
18. We have covered many topics, what else do you think is important for us to talk about?	
19. I have asked you many questions, do you have any questions for me?	

Appendix 3: Lead Facilitator Interview Form

Date _____ Time _____ Name of CC program _____ District _____

Name of Lead Facilitator _____ Village _____

Interviewer _____

	Lead	1	2
Education			
Languages			
Can read?			

QUESTIONS. Thank you for speaking with me. I have questions here that I'd like to ask you about the CC program, the volunteer facilitators, the children, the children's activities, record-keeping. Is it ok if I ask you these questions? Thank you.

1. How many times a week/month do children come for the CC?
What days of the week? What is the start and end time?

ABOUT THE CC LEAD FACILITATOR. I'd like to ask you some questions about what it's like to be a CC volunteer. Is that ok?

2. How many years have you been a CC volunteer?

3. Why did you decide to become a CC volunteer?

4. What do you like most about working at the CC?

5. What are the hardest parts about working at the CC?

6. How do your friends and family feel about you working as a volunteer at the CC?

7. Are you here at the CC every (Tuesday)? If not, how often do you usually come?

ABOUT CHILD CC PARTICIPANTS. Now I am going to ask you some questions about the children who attend the CC

8. How many children attend this CC?

9. Do the same children or different children come to the CC every (Tuesday)?

10. On average, how many of children are here on (Tuesdays)?
Range.

11. What schools and villages do the children at the CC come from?

12. Would you say that all, most or very few of the children who come to the CC program are currently going to school? If any children are not attending school, what are the reasons?

13. How old are the children who come to the CC? Altogether, in this CC, how many girls/boys; 6-11 y/o and 12-17 y/o are attending?

14. Are there any ways that the children in the CC experience stigma? Explain.

15. How many children who attend have disabilities? What kinds of disabilities do they have?

16. Are there children who are living in the community who would like to attend the CC program but cannot? What are the reasons?

17. Are children ever asked not to come back to the CC? For what reasons?

18. Do children "graduate" from the CC program? (if yes) Is there a certificate they get or a ceremony? Have children who have participated in the program ever come back as volunteers?

19. How do you think the children feel to be part of the CC program? Evidence.

ABOUT RECORD-KEEPING. I have never visited a CC before and I really want to learn how it works. I am going to ask you some questions about record-keeping and would like to see records so I can get a good idea about the procedures you use. Is it ok with you if I ask to see your records?	
20. Is there a registration sheet/notebook with names of each of the children who attend the CC? Can you show it to me?	
21. Do caregivers register their children, give permission/consent for children to attend the CC?	
22. Do you or another volunteer take daily attendance? Can you show me the attendance register?	
23. What types of information do you keep about each child who comes to the CC?	
24. Do you have any copies of training materials or guides about how to support child well-being? May I see which ones you have?	
25. Is there a daily schedule or routine of the activities you do during the (2 hours, every Tuesday)? If so, is it written or drawn? Can you show it to me?	
26. Who decides if there are special activities that the children will do at the CC?	
27. How do the volunteers prepare for a CC day? Do they meet and discuss the schedule and activities?	
28. Do the volunteers meet together to talk about the needs of individual children? Can you give me an example? Would anyone else attend the meeting where you talk about individual children?	
ABOUT CC VOLUNTEERS	
29. How many people are there in this community who come to the CC as volunteers? Men? Women?	
30. How many volunteers are usually present when the children are at the CC?	
31. What are the qualifications a person has to have to become a CC volunteer? Age?	
32. Do the CC volunteers have different skills and specialize in doing different activities with the children? Examples?	
33. Would you say that most volunteers know all, some, or very few of the children in the CC by name? How many of the (40) children in the CC do you know by name?	
34. When volunteers leave the CC, what are the main reasons?	
35. Can anyone tell a volunteer that they can no longer work in the CC? What are reasons that a volunteer might be asked to leave?	
36. Do you or anyone else ever give on-the-job trainings for the CC volunteers? Examples.	
37. Does anyone conduct background checks to ensure volunteers are not abusers?	
38. Do facilitators/volunteers sign a pledge not to harm children?	
ABOUT the CC PROGRAM. Now I have some questions to ask you about the CC program and activities you do with the children at the CC.	
39. What are the main goals of the CC program?	
40. From what you have seen, how is the CC program helpful to children? (in general, give stories)	
41. Does the CC connect with children's school teachers or the head teachers or principals? Examples.	
42. What activities does the CC carry out that support school attendance and performance?	
43. Does the CC do any outreach to families or schools if children are not attending school regularly? Examples.	

44. At the CC do the young children and the older children do different activities? Explain.	
45. Do girls and boys do different activities? Explain.	
46. Does the CC offer any vocational training activities? Examples.	
47. Do you take the children to visit different places in the community? Give examples/Where have you taken them? How often do you do this?	
48. Do people in the community who have special talents come to the CC to work with or teach the children? Give examples.	
49. Do older children ever lead activities at the CC? Take the same role as the adult volunteers?	
ABOUT EQUIPMENT and MATERIALS	
50. In the CC program are there toys, drawing materials, books, paper, pencils that children use? Is there a ball? Are there drums and other musical instruments? Other play or crafts equipment/supplies? Describe	
ABOUT CHILD ABUSE REPORTING AND HOME VISITING. Now I am going to ask you about other ways the CC volunteers help children.	
51. Do adults working at the CC ever report child abuse? To whom do they report abuse?	
52. Do the CC volunteers make visits to children's homes? What are the reasons or circumstances for which the CC volunteers make home visits? Examples.	
53. Are there any special responsibilities you have as the lead facilitator?	
54. Do parents or caregivers come to the CC? Why? What do they do? Do they volunteer? How many of the (40) children's parents have visited? Do you have a Parent Visit Day?	
ABOUT COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS	
55. Is there a CC Advisory Committee who oversees the CC program? What do they do to support the CC?	
56. In what ways do the local chiefs support the CC? Do they ever visit?	
57. In what ways do the local churches or mosques support the CC? Do they visit?	
58. In what ways do other people in the community contribute to the CC? How often do they visit?	
FINAL QUESTIONS. I have asked you a lot of questions today. Thank you so much for helping me. I just have a few more questions to ask you.	
59. Do the CC volunteers offer any services for the parents of the children who attend the CC? Examples. CAUTION	
60. Do volunteers do any outreach to the community to tell them about the CC or teach about the needs of children? Examples. CAUTION	
61. Do you think most people in the community respect the CC program? Are there any criticisms of the CC program in the community? Explain.	
62. What do you think would make the biggest improvements to this CC program?	
63. I've asked you a lot of questions about the CC and about the volunteers and the children. Is there anything else important about the CC that you would like to tell me?	

Appendix 4: Form for General Group Interview of Facilitators

Date _____ Time _____ Name of CC Program _____

Village _____ Who was interviewed? _____

Interviewer _____ Recorder _____

Name	Sex	Age <20	Age ~parent	Age ~grandparent	How long have you worked at this CC?
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

CC PROGRAM First, I am going to ask general questions about the program.	
1. What are the main goals of the CC program?	
2. From what you have seen, how is the CC program helpful to children? (in general, then ask for examples)	
3. From what you have seen, how has the CC been helpful in improving children's school attendance/performance? (in general, then ask for examples)	
4. Do children do homework at the CC? Who helps them?	
5. When the children who attend the CC regularly stop coming, what are generally the reasons?	
6. What kind of activities do the children do at the CC?	
7. When they play, what do they play?	
8. Do you prepare for the activities? When and how?	
9. Do older children get assigned duties of child care or supervision of the younger children?	
10. What problems do you have with the children when you are supervising their activities?	
11. When a child doesn't do what you tell them to do, what do you do?	
12. Do the children eat a meal or a snack at the CC? Who provides the food? What food do they usually have?	
13. Do they learn traditional cultural practices? What kind? Who teaches them?	
14. Do you tell stories or read to the children? (Describe)	
15. Do children make things? What do they make?	
16. Do you use drama/skits to teach children in the CC? What does/do the drama/skits teach?	
17. What activities do you do to make the kids happier?	
PSYCHOSOCIAL Now I'm going to ask you about how you take care of certain child situations	
18. What do you do for a child who seems frightened or worried?	
19. Do CC volunteers help children develop friendships? How?	
20. If a child does not have friends, what do you do?	
21. If a child feels sad, what do you do?	
22. If a child can't stand up for herself or himself, what do you do?	
23. If you see a child hit another child, what do you do?	
24. When a child misbehaves at CC, what are the reasons?	

25. Tell us a story about when you noticed a child had a difficult problem and you helped them with the problem.	
26. Are there any ways that the children in the CC program are stigmatized?	
ABOUT THE JOB OF A VOLUNTEER	
27. Why did you decide to become a CC volunteer?	
28. Have you had any training that has helped you do this volunteer job? (Where? What?)	
29. What do you like the most about your working at the CC?	
30. What are the hardest parts about working at the CC?	
31. If you got a paying job, would you stop volunteering for the CC? (Raise your hand) # = _____	
32. How do your friends and family feel about your being a volunteer at the CC? (Raise your hand) # = _____	
33. How do you think most people in the community feel about the CC program? (Raise your hand) # = _____	
34. What are the biggest challenges the children in this program face?	
35. What do you think would make the biggest improvements to this CC program?	
36. We have asked you a lot of questions about this CC. What's important that we have not talked about?	
37. Do you have any questions for me?	

Appendix 5: Community Social Workers/Child Protection Workers Interview Form

Date _____ Time _____ District _____

Name of Social Worker (SW)/Child Protection Worker (CPW) _____

#CCs in the District _____

Interviewer _____ Recorder _____

CC	Town	Distance to Child Protection Worker	Community has Victim Support Unit	Children's Corner has made Referrals to Child Protection Worker or Community Social Worker
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

QUESTIONS	
Thank you for your willingness to speak with us. We are going to ask you some questions about how people in your office interact with CCs within the District.	
1. How do the CC volunteers/facilitators make a referral to a SW or a CPW? Can you give an example of how a referral came from a CC volunteer to a SW or CPW?	
2. Have you had referrals about abuse that occurred while children were attending the CC program? Child to child/ adult to child? Other places? Home/school/latrines/walking to school/CC?	
3. What do you think are the obstacles to CC volunteers making referrals?	
4. Do you think that most CC facilitators are aware that it is their responsibility to report child abuse? What makes you think yes/no?	
5. Do you or other CPW's make regular visits to the CC's? What is the purpose of the visits? Have you ever conducted trainings for the volunteers? About what? Have other organizations (NGOs, Government) provided support or training to CCs?	

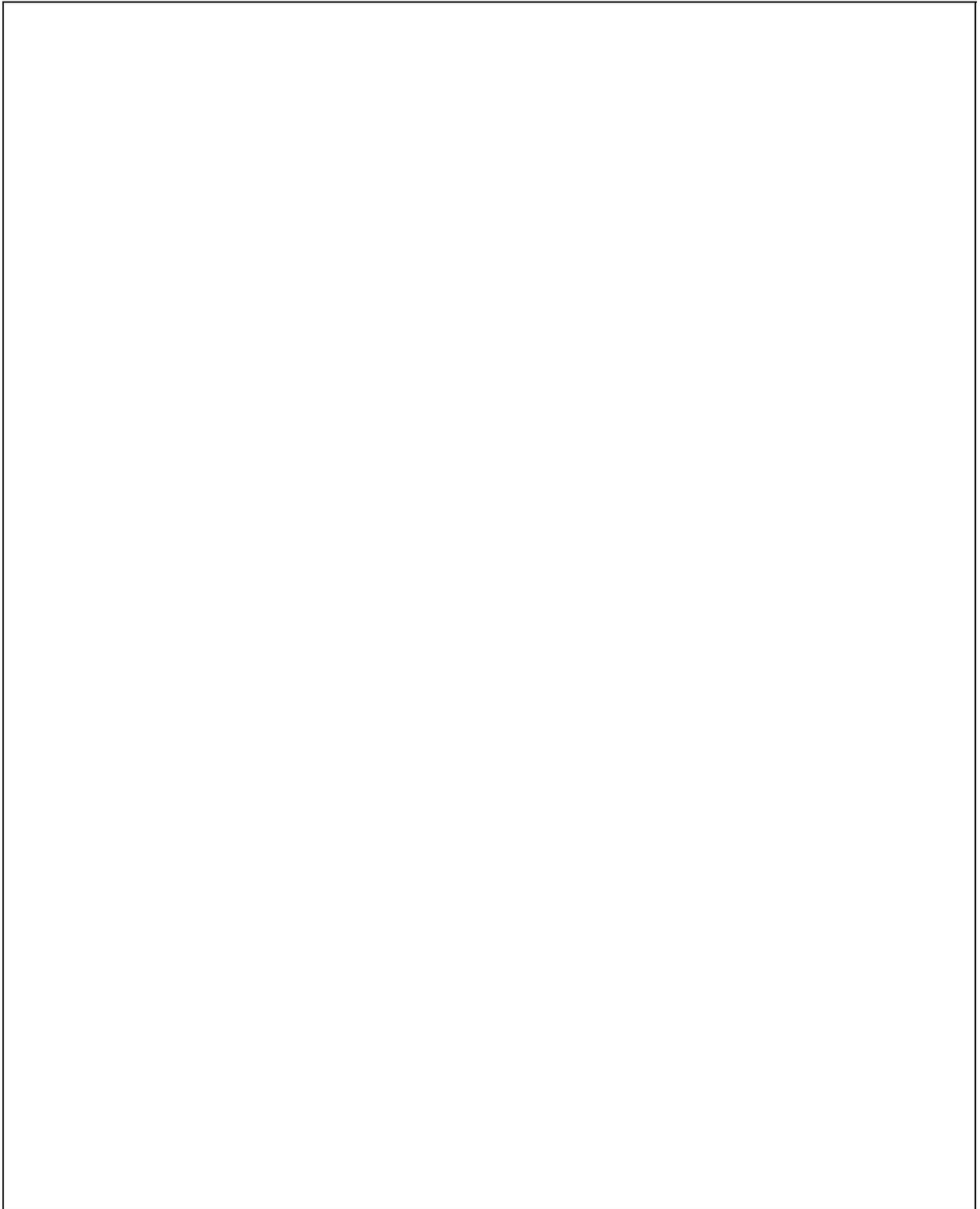
Appendix 6: CC Observation Form

Date _____ Time _____ Name of CC Program _____

Who was observed? # of children _____; # of volunteers? _____ Observer _____

PHYSICAL SPACE AND EQUIPMENT	
1. Is there a building with a roof? Describe/Draw model below.	
2. How much traffic is there nearby? Describe	
3. What is the neighborhood like? Describe	
4. Are there toilets? Are they private? Describe	
5. Is there water to wash hands?	
6. Are there hazards or safety concerns? Describe	
7. Is there: Indoor space only/outdoor space only/indoor & outdoor space?	
8. Are there any tables, chairs, chalk board? Describe:	
9. In the CC program are there toys, books, paper, pencils that children use? Is there a ball? Are there drums and other instruments? Describe:	
10. What are the materials that children use for toys and art projects?	
OBSERVATION OF CHILDREN: Time Started _____; Time Stopped: _____; If possible, try for a 15 minute observation period of interactions	
11. Do they get a snack? Y/N WHAT	
12. Are they eating food from home? Y/N	
13. Do they share food? Y/N	
14. Is there water/drinks available? Y/N	
15. In what kind of an area do the children play? Describe	
16. Is there a garden? What is growing? Describe	
17. What were volunteers doing with children, not with children? Describe:	
What did adults do with children who were misbehaving or isolated? DESCRIBE:	
Did the volunteers: Y/N, Describe:	
19. Participate in an activity with the children?	
20. Take action to include a child who was not engaged? HOW?	
21. Respond to a child who was crying or upset. HOW?	
22. Respond to a child who was angry/fighting. HOW?	
23. Respond to child who was sad/isolated from group? HOW?	
24. Respond to conflicts between children? HOW?	
25. Respond to a safety concern. HOW?	
26. What kinds of activities are the children doing: alone and together?	
27. Circle: Mostly playing alone/in groups	
28. When playing alone, What are they doing?	
29. When playing in groups, what are they doing?	
Did you see: (Y/N, describe)	
30. Peer conflict: Describe	
31. Bullying: Describe	
32. Cooperative play: Describe	
33. Older children helping/playing with younger children: Describe	
34. Children with disabilities? If yes, are they involved in activities or excluded: Describe	

Draw a schematic of the CC's physical layout:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a schematic of the CC's physical layout. The box is oriented vertically and occupies most of the page's width and height.

Appendix 7: Overview of Four CCs in Balaka and Mangochi Districts

	Kankao/Balaka	Kabango/ Balaka	Masongola/ Mangochi	Lusalumwe/ Mangochi
No of children registered	161	60	105	91
No of OVC registered	17?	12	75	50
No of children who usually attend CC	140	58	105	40
% of children enrolled in school	100%	100%	100%	80%
Types of schools where children are enrolled	Primary, only	Primary, only	Primary, only Standards 5-8	Primary, only
Age range of children	6-18yrs	6-13yrs	11-17yrs	9-early 20's
Number of Facilitators	3	2	1	3
Child: Facilitator ratio	54:1	30:1	105:1	30:1
Meeting place	Community gathering place, near primary school	Primary school playground, access to one classroom	Primary school playground, access to facilitator's office for storage	Large field and area surrounding health clinic
Meeting day & time	Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-4:30pm	Thursday 2-3:30pm	Thursday 2-4pm	Saturday 3pm-dusk
Education Level of Lead Facilitator	Secondary school completion		5 years of post-secondary education, certified teacher	A-certified teacher & - medical assistant
Teacher(s) Function as Academic Liaison	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Date CC was established	2014	2012	2014	2015

Appendix 8: CC Visit Summaries

1. Kankao Children's Corner

Date of Visit: 11 November 2015, 2-4pm

Interview respondents: The CC Lead Facilitator; CC Mentors (2); six representatives from the CBO/Quality Insurance Team (6); teachers from the local secondary school (2) who helped with interpretation; and CC children (24)

CC meeting day and time: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30 to 4:30

CC meeting place: The Kankao CC meets under a large tree in the yard across from the Primary School. They use the play field that is between the tree and the primary school. There was a small building with a desk and benches that they used during our visit but the Lead Facilitator indicated the need for a place to meet when it is raining. The space has houses around it and is at the end of the road so no traffic. The CC participants use the latrines at the school; no water is available.

Year program began: Program began about 1.5 years ago on Sundays and then in March of 2015 moved to the current schedule.

Children attending: 161 children are currently enrolled and approximately 140 come every T-Th to the program. 300 were enrolled a year ago and during the rainy season some stopped coming and did not return. The participating children all attend the Primary School; they range in age from 6 to 18, about 80 are girls. Seventeen are orphans, many other are vulnerable including 5 physically disabled children (deaf, delayed).

Goals for the CC from Facilitator's perspective:

- Encouraging children to be good in school
- Keeping children safe from abuse
- Keeping children safe from other dangerous things

Program activities:

- Sports activities—netball, football
- Singing—choir
- Drama
- Poetry
- Learning/school work—Facilitator helps with homework; teachers in turn help facilitators regarding teaching strategies
- Counseling sessions
- Activities from the CC Facilitator Guide: The CBO has read the CC Facilitator Guide. They think that it has much good material but will only be useful if they and facilitators are trained in how to use the materials/ teach the lessons and respond to the children's individual problems.

Special features:

- Includes children with physical challenges (deaf, physically disabled)
- The CC Facilitators connect with the school teachers in a variety of ways. If children are not doing well in school, the CC staff helps the children. If children are having trouble with homework and want help and the CC Facilitators don't know how to do the homework themselves, they consult with teachers to give them advice as to how to teach the concepts.
- The CC Facilitators recognize that some children are "fast learners"; these children lead the younger children/other children in drama, choir, teach arithmetic, etc.
- Learners assist each other with math and reading.
- They have made drums and guitars and formed a band of 10 girls and boys.
- They have a choir.

CBO and community support:

- CBO supported by establishing this CC close to the primary school. The Standard 8 teacher is a member of the CBO and provided a tour of the school.
- Village Leader encourages the CC Facilitators to talk about the CC program at community events and forums.
- The school support the CC by providing teaching materials, chalk, and allowing the CC to store materials in their staff lounge
- The CBO encourage the children to attend the CC
- CC Facilitators ask the teachers for help to guide their support of the CC children's school work.
- CBO recruitment and selection of CC Facilitators: No specific qualifications, other than being 20 years of age or older. The CBO advertised the position, interviewed the candidates and tried to select based on those that are most interested in helping children with their problems. They select volunteers with "knowledge" so they can help the children. They do not select based on years of education because they may not get the person who is most committed that way.

Motivation for CC children to attend from CBO perspective:

- Provide opportunity for OVC to associate with other children who do not have the same problems
- Give them a place with other children where they are not discriminated against
- Place where children can meet with their friends and discuss challenges they are experiencing which they cannot talk about at home
- Provide something for the children to do after school rather than hanging out in town, watching videos and getting into trouble with things like drugs, early sex,
- Help them with reading and school work
- Divert them from bad behavior like drug use, early sex, just watching videos and not attending school
- Help OVC participate in the community and not feel marginalized
- CBO is looking for good development of the children so children can support the community as they grow up.

Parent involvement:

- CC Facilitator communicates with parents about child's progress—parents come to CC to report on progress.
- Village Head encourages the CC Facilitators to present at community meetings and encourages the parents to let their children attend the CC.
- The CC Facilitator has made ~ 5 home visits in the past 1.5 years. If children are absent from school and CC, they visit parent to find out why attendance is poor and the child is not in school. The CC Facilitators counsel the parents and encourage them to prioritize school for their children.

Motivation to attend the CC from children's perspective:

- Help with homework –math and reading *can bring challenges from school class to mentors who will help.*
- Enjoy the activities such net ball, football, soccer, poems, games, dramas.
- Learn how to respect older people
- Learn how to remove bad thoughts and anxiety from your mind
- Learn not to say bad things about other people who have lost their parents, say helpful things to them
- Learn about helping parents with chores like fetching water
- Help friends who have dropped out of school—and can't read—help them with their reading.
- One girl said, "*I did not know anything before and now I can play soccer as good as a boy.*"

Motivation to attend from the CBO perspective:

- Help with school work
- Positive place to be
- Stay out of bad behaviors

- Feel supported

Stated needs:

- Training needs were stated to include the following: CBO wants training on how to better support the CC Facilitators as they provide support for youth with problems; CBO wants training in how to carry out the activities described in the CC Facilitator Guide; the CC Facilitators want to learn new methods to interview, counsel and support the children.
- A place to meet during the rainy season.
- Materials: Balls, books, learning material.

2. Kabango Children's Corner

Date of visit: 11 November 2015, 1:30-3pm

Interview respondents: Facilitators (2), Health Surveillance Assistant (1), and CBO members (10)

CC meeting time: Thursdays, 2-3:30 pm. This program was started three years ago.

CC meeting place: The CC meets next to the school and has a large playfield. At each end are trees for shade. A parent built a strong see-saw which the children use extensively; they line up and have a system to coordinate its use.

Children attending CC: 60 children are registered in the CC, of which 58 are in attendance most days. There are 34 males and 26 females registered. 2 orphans (1 M, 1 F) attend the program, and 11 others are considered vulnerable (6 M, 5 F). There are 57 children between the ages of 6-11 years old, 2 are 12 years old, and 1 is 13 years old.

Goals of CC from Facilitators' perspectives:

- Improve the education of the children, especially the vulnerable children
- Help children with the challenges they have in their homes so they have fewer worries and anxiety
- Assist those children who don't read with learning to read

Program activities:

- Educational tasks like revising school work, and learning how to write and read.
- Special attention for children who are identified as having problems with school work
- Sports like football, net ball, tag, and other physical activities.
- Games and organized play involving the see-saw Jingo, Nsikwa, and wire toys.
- Life skills like good manners, learning to be respectful to their parents and elders, and solving problems.
- Traditional dances and singing.
- Help with social issues or problems at home.
- Snacks are not available
- A copy of the CC Facilitator Guide is available, but the CBO and facilitators have not been trained, nor have they read it.

Special features:

- Water on the premises
- Proximity and access to school.
- Close working relationship between facilitators and the teachers
- Discussion of the students' progress regularly so that individual difficulties can be addressed
- Availability of two primary school teachers who serve as educational advisors and help CC children with school work, especially Math
- Support of facilitators by CBO who assist CC when they have needs

- Community sensitization which helped communicate merits of CC to community and served as a tool for raising awareness of the needs of vulnerable children and the importance of recruiting volunteers
- Support of the Chief, who encourages parents to send their children to the CC, encourages children directly, helps the CBO to recruit volunteers, and gave the CC a ball.

CBO and community support:

- Assistance of USAID ASSIST in supporting CBO
- Support of the Chief in encouraging the community to support the CC and endorsement of the CC as a mechanism to keep children in school and away from the video kiosks.
- Sensitization meeting in community which helped generate interest for potential facilitators
- A monthly briefing about the CC, which is conducted by the CBO.

Benefits of CC from the CBO perspective: The CC helps orphans and vulnerable children who are not performing well in school, gets them integrated with other children, and helps them become sharp learners.

Parent involvement: Parents occasionally help teach the children traditional activities, like singing and dancing. The facilitators make home visits when the children miss school. Parents help out at the CC on specific activities.

Motivation for children to attend the CC: The children get to play, improve their school performance and receive the support of community members outside of their immediate families.

Training: There was consensus among the respondents that more training was needed and awareness that there were many psychosocial needs among the children that are not met and training would help this endeavor.

Stated needs: Interviewed respondents reported that they need learning and play materials, food, and more volunteers. They need support from parents and the community for coming to program regularly. They need the community to see the value in the CC and support facilitators. They mentioned needing training throughout the interview.

3. Masongola Children's Corner

Date of visit: 12 November 2015 1:30-3pm

Interview respondents: The CC Facilitator (there is only one); 19 representatives from the CBO, 9 parents, Lead Teacher from the Masongola Primary School, and 14 CC children.

CC meeting day and time: Thursday from 2-4

CC meeting place: The Masongola CC uses the play fields at the primary school, as well as the Lead Teacher's office for storage. The space is large, open with some shaded areas.

Year program began: 2014—second year of the program

Children attending: Approximately 130 children participate in the CC, 75 OVC are registered and another 25-30 children come each week. Program currently serves youth only in Standards 5-8. CC participants range in age from 11-17.

Goals for the CC from Facilitator's perspective:

- So that the children are able to express themselves
- Remove shyness
- Talk in a group without problems

- Rescue them from overwork at home

Program activities:

- Sports activities—netball, soccer, volleyball
- Games including a math game
- Drama
- Learning/school work—Facilitator helps with homework
- Debating—they debate the importance of education vs advantages of not attending school
- Academic activities—radios that they use in some activities to get information. No drawing materials or musical instruments observed however this program is integrated with the school and they may use school materials
- Activities from the CC Facilitator Guide: The CBO Chairman (also head of the Parent-Teacher Association) had read through the guide but commented that it appeared complicated; the CC Facilitator had no knowledge of the CC Facilitator Guide.

Special features:

- Facilitator asks children about their problems, letting them express their worries and problems; the Lead Teacher and Parish Priest help with this as well. The local health care worker and the school's Mothers' Club work with the girls about their sexual development
- Facilitator seeks support from community members—e.g. local imam provides some support for soap, uniforms.
- Because children sometimes come to the program hungry, CC Facilitator sometimes makes porridge for them—materials supplied by the school/community
- Program has a scheduled timetable so that ½ the time is for play and ½ the time is for homework
- CC only formally meets on Thurs afternoons from 2-4 but the children now come together on Tues and Fridays as well, and the Standard 8 students get out of school at noon so they join CC activities all afternoon.
- They have formed a football team that competes with other teams in the area, , CC children take a bus to games

CBO on what is being gained:

- Addressing the needs of vulnerable children
- Integrating OVC with other children which can diminish stigma and enhance OVC well-being
- Assisting children in school performance gains

CBO and community support:

- Facilitator reports feeling very supported by the community
- Village Head, Head Teacher at the Primary School, Parish Priest all come to the CC and interact with the children and provide ideas to the CC Facilitator.
- The Imam provides some material support—funds for soap, uniforms
- The nuns at the convent provide services for children who have special needs—helped one disabled child who came to the CC.
- School provides space, materials, supports CC Facilitator in his work
- CBO recruitment and selection of CC Facilitators: The facilitators need to have completed Standard 8 and be of high moral character.
- CBO goals for CC: Support school success, building social skills and character, preparing to be good community members

Parent involvement:

- CC Facilitator reaches out to parents/guardians to ask about children's health history to find out if they have health problems that would interfere with their ability to participate in CC activities.
- Village Head talks to the parents at the Parent-Teacher Association meetings and encourages them to let their children come.

Motivation to attend the CC from children's perspective:

- Help with homework
- Healthy body
- Remove stress and anxiety
- Learn how to take care of sick people

Motivation for CC from CBO perspective:

- Promotion of school success
- Intervening if parents keep children home from school
- Intervening if wayward children are going to the video kiosks instead of school
- Important to guide socialization

Stated needs:

- Training which addresses the need for CC facilitators to learn new methods to interview, counsel and support the children and training on CC Facilitator Guide
- Materials--Learning materials
- Nutritional supplements—*sometimes the children are hungry with no energy to participate, have to buy food and cook porridge for them so they can even participate in the games*

4. Lusalumwe Children's Corner

Date of visit: 12 November 2015, 4pm – 6:30pm

Interview respondents: 2 Lead Facilitators, 1 Mentor, 3 CBO members, 12 children

CC meeting day and time: Saturday afternoon, 4pm until dusk

Year program began: Within the past year

Place of CC meeting: The Children's Corner meets in an area across the road from the market and on the grounds of the health clinic. It has a very large soccer field and smaller informal play areas. The area had traditionally been a place where children from the community came to play unsupervised.

Children attending CC: 91 children are registered in the CC. ~50 are orphans ~40 attend each Saturday; composition changes from Saturday to Saturday. Child ages range from 9-early 20; few are <11 yrs. 50% are girls. Most are going to school; some are drop-outs.

Goals for CC from Facilitators' perspective:

- Encourage education, help them to be comfortable seeking health care (CC participants get to jump the line if they come to the clinic so they can be seen and return to lessons). Keeping girls safe from dangers of being near the videos
- Motivate school performance, gender equality, focus on education

Program activities:

- Begin CC with lessons on hygiene, sexually transmitted infections, early marriages, early pregnancies, sex education, working hard in class, how to do homework.
- Review lessons at end of CC session
- Play
 - Older boys (18-20) play football, claiming the big field.
 - Young children sing, dance, play games.
 - Children in the mid age range play netball, mancala, draft, and other games.
- Homework (math, reading)
- No food is served
- A few activities in CC Facilitator's Guide: most require materials that are not available.

- Psychosocial support of individual children who are having problems: drop out of school, cannot afford school supplies, severe mental health problems; pregnancy
- Refer children reporting abuse to the right place
- Treatment for sexually transmitted infections in clinic, distribution of condoms (20/youth at a time)
- Practice sewing on UNICEF-donated sewing machine, knitting
- Learn gardening skills to plant kitchen garden at home

Special features of the CC program:

- The CC program provides supervised activities in a place where children had direct access to the market with many opportunities to engage in bad behavior. With supervision, the children engage in prosocial activities in this familiar space
- Skilled teacher and health care providers are facilitators and bring many skills to the CC program
- Reproductive health component for older children
- CC attendees who come to clinic get to cut the line and be treated immediately so they can return to school
- 90% of children registered in CC are Muslim. Meeting on Saturday afternoon, the CC session conflicts with the Madras School.

CBO and community support of CC program:

- CBO select CC facilitators using these criteria
 - Malawi Certificate of Education
 - Good morals and behavior
 - People they know well
- CBO monitors the CC and facilitators
- Training and material support (uniforms, community garden materials) from NAMWERA AIDS Co.
- Chiefs provide subsidies (seeds) for the kitchen garden programs and encourage parents to send their children to the CC
- School supports CC by providing staff who help with the activities
- Health center contributes area for CC to meet, CC facilitators, reproductive health education, condoms, curative services to adolescents

Parent involvement in CC:

- Parents come to observe the children at the CC.
- Facilitators make home visits when children's problems (e.g., pregnancy, school attendance, mental illness) are best addressed with parent involvement.

Motivation to come to CC from child perspective:

- Football, draft, netball, Bao, reading
- Making friends and socializing
- Staying away from bad behavior

Stated needs:

- Resources (e.g., small balls, toys, crayons, paper, a structure where children's art could be put on the wall)
- Training in the Facilitator Guide (with role play, supervision, so that the facilitator can understand the activities)
- More space (owner of space has a negative attitude)

Appendix 9: Record-keeping in the Four CCs Visited

CC	Registration	Attendance	OVC	School Performance	Abuse Reporting
Kankao	First names of all registered children	Take attendance every session	Notes in registration book about number of orphans (1,2) and children with disabilities	We did not see school records.	No
Kabango	First and last names of all registered children	Take attendance every day	Notes in registration book about number of orphans (1,2) and children with disabilities	We did not see school records	No
Masongola	First and last names of all registered OVC in CC	No	Yes	OVC by the Standard and Orphan status, gender, guardians name and relationship, village, head of household OVC – number/% passing exams for moving forward, Chichewa, English, Life Skills, Math, Science, Social Studies	No
Lusalumwe	First and last names of all registered children, sex, and class in school	No, planning to begin	Notes in registration book about number of orphans (1,2) and children with disabilities	Test scores in all courses tracked over 6 school sessions for each individual OVC Documentation for OVCs % passing, % girls and % boys passing/ failing	No

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